

# POTOMAC CRESCENT WALDORF SCHOOL

## EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

### PARENT-CHILD CLASS

Potomac Crescent offers a unique Parent-Child class for the youngest children. In this class, a parent (or caregiver) attends with the child one morning per week.

In the classroom parents are busy with various tasks, many of which are centered in the domestic arts—baking, washing and ironing, sewing—as well as activities like woodworking and craft work. The children can help in this work or play freely. This program is designed specifically as a first school experience for the young child, who may not yet be ready to separate completely from a parent. He or she can begin to move into greater independence and into a more social play experience with the support of the parent's presence and with the help of experienced teachers.

We follow a consistent rhythm in our days together: a free play/work time followed by cleanup, a gathering together with finger plays and songs leading into our morning verse of welcome, then a simple circle time with movement, songs, and verses centered around an experience of the seasons. During our snack time, we eat what we, children and parents, have baked and prepared in the classroom. After outdoor time on our playground, we end the day with a story or puppet play.

Through classroom participation parents can experience first-hand the Waldorf approach to early education, and they can deepen their understanding of the young child, and specifically of their own child. Regular monthly parent meetings offer a forum for study and discussion on topics such as child development, discipline, rhythm in home life, and children's play.

This class is for children who are at least 2 1/4 years old by the start of the school year. Children need not be toilet trained in order to take part in this program. The class meets from 9:45 until 12:00 noon one morning per week. Parents enroll for the year in either the Thursday or Friday class. A lead teacher and assistant teacher work with a maximum of ten parent and child pairs per group. Prospective parents are welcome to observe a class by arrangement with the school.

### THREE-DAY AND FIVE-DAY KINDERGARTENS

The emphasis in our Kindergarten classes is on developing will forces. We cultivate the young child's ability to learn through imitation, and the teacher sets an example through her or his daily classwork activities. We encourage healthy, fantasy-filled play with simple materials from the natural world. Thus, through imagination and imitation, the children try on the world and make it their own.

Every effort is made to make the Kindergarten classroom a warm, homelike environment for the children. Much learning takes place through imitation and example—rather than through instruction. Young children strive to become full human beings and want to engage in all healthy aspects of life. The teacher helps them to accomplish this.

In the Waldorf Kindergarten the teacher plays a central role; through her or his example the children enter the life of the kindergarten deeply. They experience the regular rhythm of each day's activities, be it household work, arts, or crafts. They are led into the yearly rhythm of the seasons with uplifting festivals, which are alive with rich colors, soulful moods, and heartfelt activities. The teacher introduces the children to song and dance, gesture and verse in the daily movements of "circle time." The children become familiar with the world of stories, both nature tales and appropriate fairy and folk tales, which are told to them in the time-honored oral tradition, or are presented as simple table puppet or marionette plays. The children come to know and love the Kindergarten world, and through it, the wider world around them.

An important task of the Kindergarten teacher is to help the children grow through creative, open-ended play. Through such play, the children create the world anew each day and try on every imaginable situation within it. They build houses, pilot ships, fly rockets and drive fire engines. They explore life in homes and farms, forests and mountains, underwater caverns and outer space. They create their play worlds using the simplest of materials, such as logs and stumps, stones and shells, cloths and playstands. In the course of play, their growth in all areas is stimulated physically, emotionally, socially, mentally, and spiritually. As has been confirmed by a growing body of research, such open-ended, cre-

ative play lays a foundation for emotional and social well-being, and for lively, imaginative thinking in the adolescent and adult. It also stimulates an interest for all aspects of life, which the children may cultivate through academic studies in the elementary grades and beyond. Play is at the very heart and soul of healthy early childhood, and is the center of the Waldorf Kindergarten.

Potomac Crescent offers two Kindergarten classes. For those children who are at least 3 1/2 years old at the start of the school year, we have a three-day class that meets on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. For those who are at least 4 1/2 years old at the start of the school year, we offer a five-day class, Monday through Friday mornings. Many children attend this class for two years. A lead teacher and an assistant work with a group of 16 children. Children in our Kindergartens may also attend the Afternoon Program, for which there is a separate application and tuition schedule.

#### AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Potomac Crescent School offers an Afternoon Program for children enrolled in the Five-day and Three-day Kindergartens.

The Afternoon Program complements the morning Kindergarten: the same Waldorf education principles and care shape the program. The morning program flows into the afternoon program, creating a seamless transition for the child. The Afternoon Program offers a time to receive nourishment, rest, digest the morning activities, socialize, and play.

The program begins at noon, with a brief time outside, followed by lunch. Children bring their own lunches. Children prepare for rest with a ritual that is not rushed. The morning is so full for the children that the afternoon should allow for them to breathe in and digest their morning. After a 30-minute rest, in a darkened room, the children are gently awakened. Those who need to rest longer do so, and the rest enjoy coloring or making a craft. Depending on the day of the week and/or weather, they may garden, go for walks to collect "treasures" for a craft, go to the playground, or stay inside for part of the time with a planned activity.

The Afternoon Program is offered Monday through Friday, from noon until 3:00 pm. Children may enroll at any time during the school year for two or more days each week. Space is limited, however,

and there are no "drop-ins." Children are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Those who start part-way through the year will have their tuition prorated. The application for the Afternoon Program is a part of the kindergarten application. Financial assistance is not available for this program.

#### THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

Potomac Crescent offers the early elementary grades. Information on these classes can be requested from the office.

#### SPECIALITY CLASSES

Children in both Kindergartens and the Grades receive Eurythmy lessons, a movement class unique to Waldorf schools. Children in the Grades also learn a foreign language.



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Financial assistance is available.

The Northern Virginia Waldorf School Initiative (NVWSI) dba Potomac Crescent Waldorf School does not discriminate by race, color, ethnic or national origin, or religion in its admissions, administrative, financial aid or any other policies.

The school is a non-profit corporation with tax-exempt status under IRS 501 c(3).